MARCH
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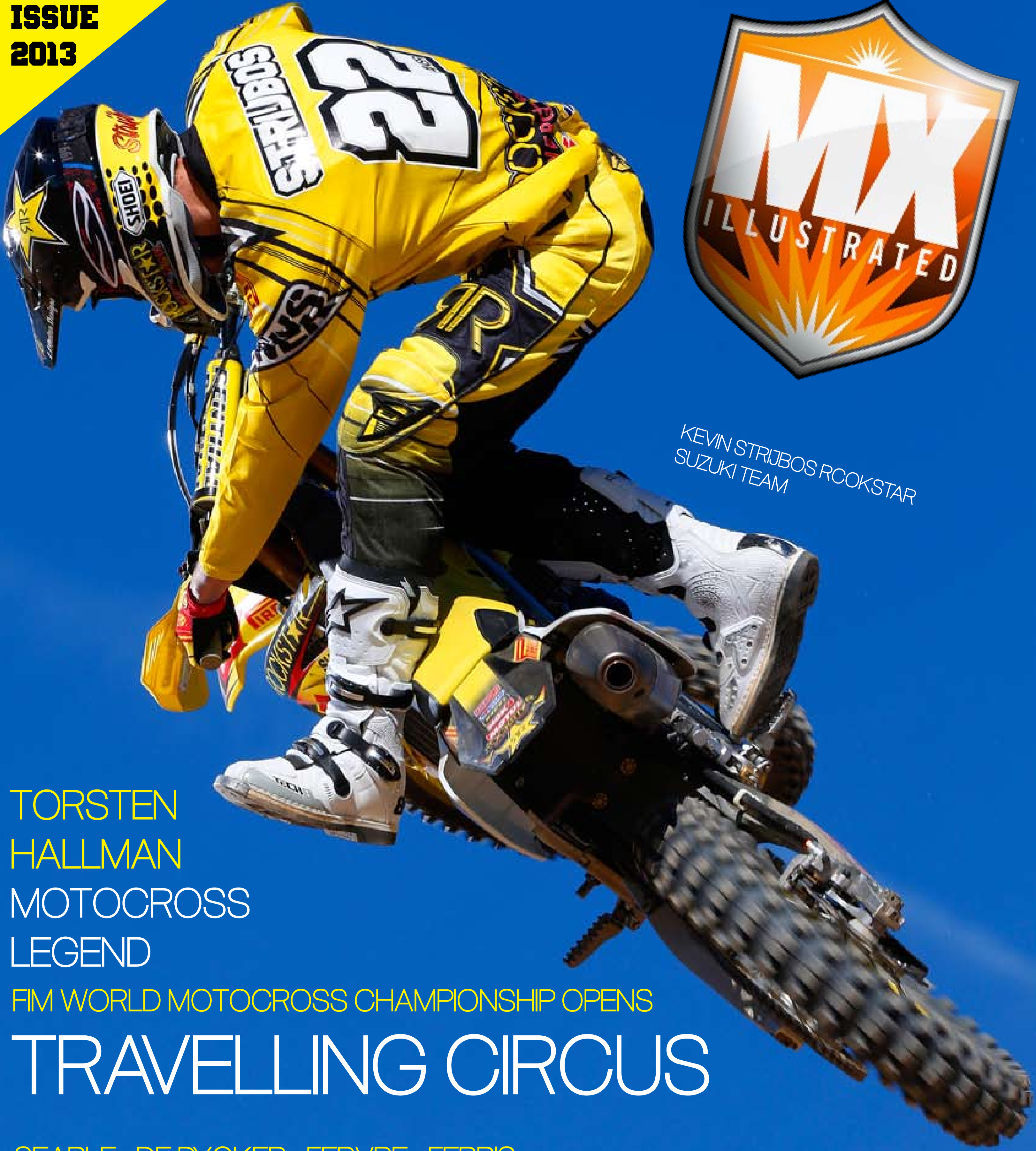
2013

MX ILLUSTRATED



KEVIN STRIJBOS RCOKSTAR
SUZUKI TEAM

TORSTEN HALLMAN MOTOCROSS LEGEND

FIM WORLD MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP OPENS

TRAVELLING CIRCUS

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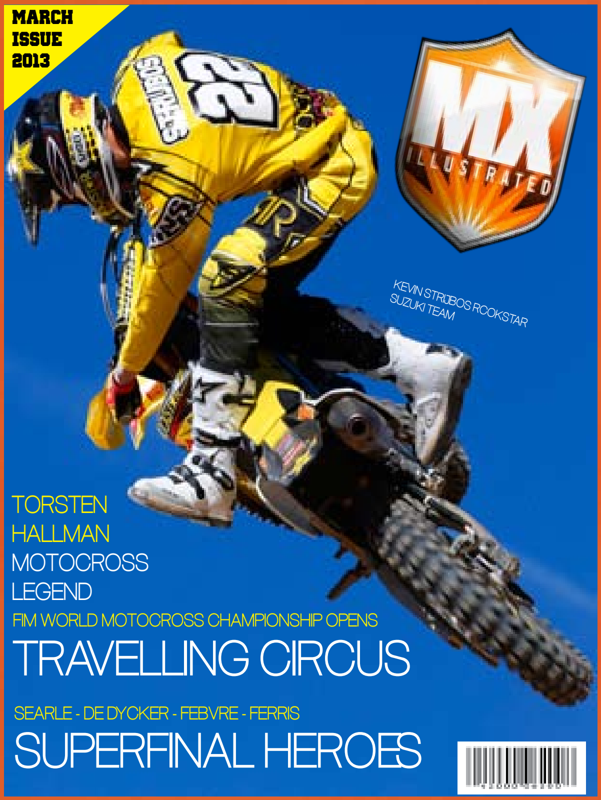

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COVER IMAGE
Kevin Strjbos - Ray Archer image
CONTENTS IMAGE
Antonio Cairoli - Ray Archer image

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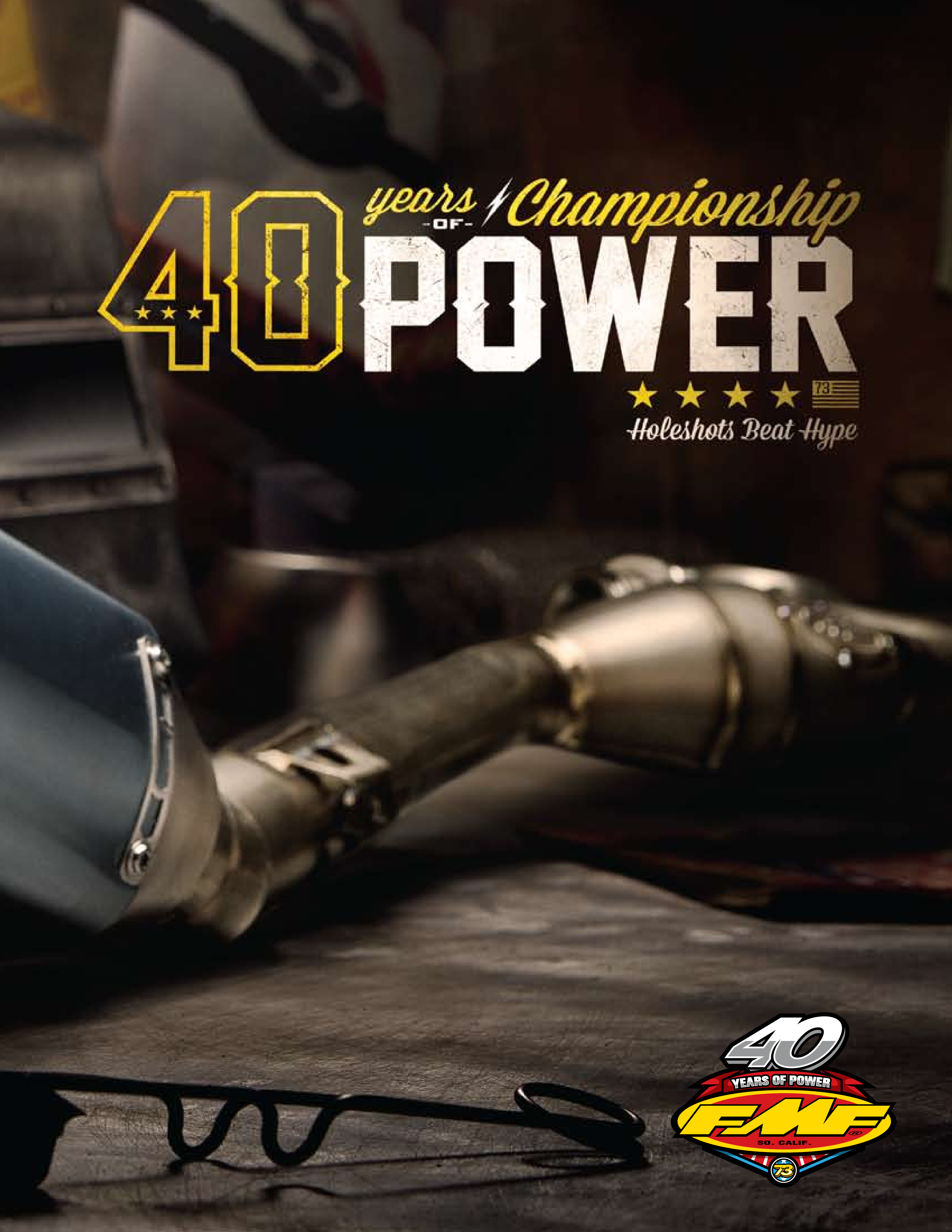
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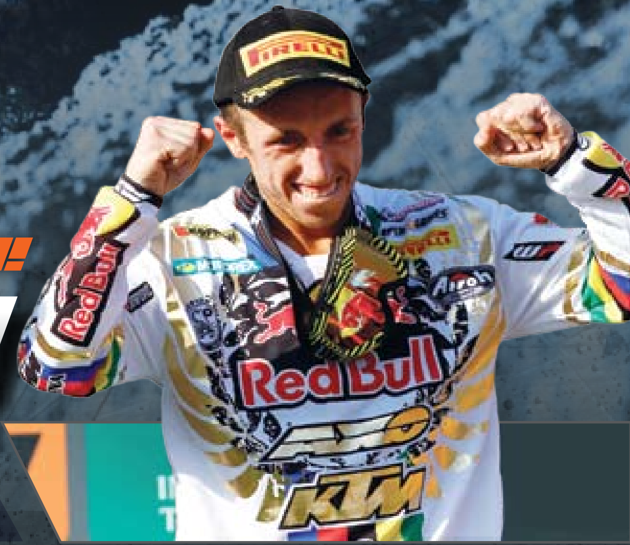

HAT TRICK FOR TONY CAIROLI!

TRICAIROLI

Red Bull KTM's Italian factory rider Tony Cairoli takes his third consecutive MX1 World Championship title for KTM. The six-times Motocross Champion has won around half of all the races in 2012 on his KTM 350 SX-F and has taken more than 80 percent of the available points – GRANDE TONY!

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JEFFREY HERLINGS
MX2 WORLD CHAMPION!

ORANJE

The young Dutch rider from the Red Bull KTM Factory Racing Team celebrates his first senior World Championship title in 2012. Following Tyla Rattray in 2008, Marvin Musquin in 2009 and 2010 and Ken Roczen in 2011, Herlings is the fifth rider in a row to take the MX2 World title with the KTM 250 SX-F!

Photos: Azevedo J.P., Archer R.

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MARVINS MUSQUIN

The Two times World Motocross Champion remains close to the hearts of the European public. His friendly and honest attitude gained him a lot of friend on the GP scene and everyone was happy to see him finally get an AMA Supercross win in Dayttona. Simon Cudby image

AMSOIL
AMSOIL

RYAN DUNGEY

Another of the nice guys of Motocross. He isn't winning at the moment, but his time will come when they head Outdoors and like his Red Bull KTM team-mate Musquin not too many people in Europe will be unhappy when he does start winning. Simon Cudby image

MAX ANSTIE

Anstie is a nice kid, and loves to have fun. Here during a Suzuki photo shoot he gets to ride an Elephant. Another of the Ray Archer images.

SUZUKI
SUZUKI
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STEVEN FROSSARD

The Frenchman has not started the season as well as maybe hoped, but he will slowly regroup and come in swinging in Valkenswaard and Sevlievo. Yamaha image

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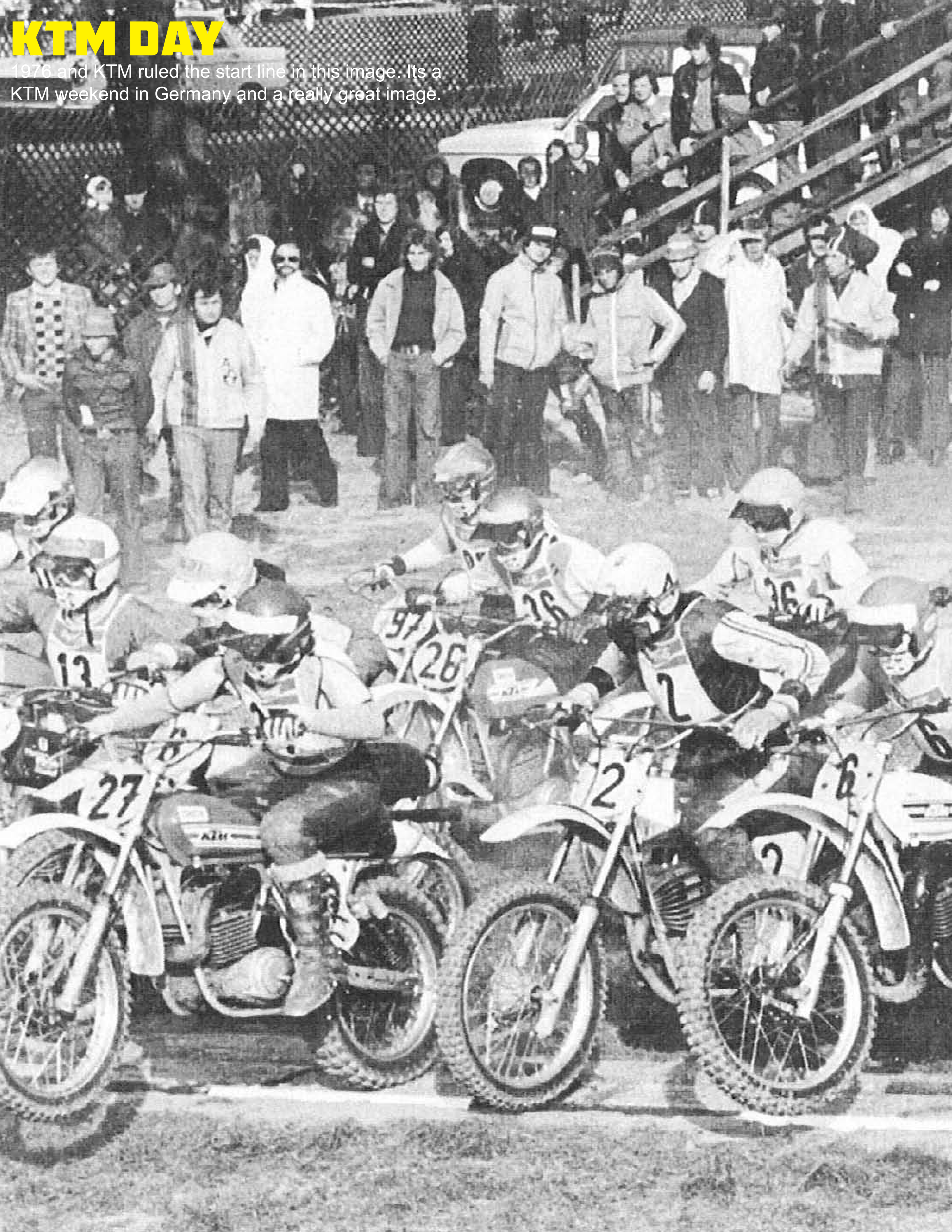
KTM DAY

1976 and KTM ruled the start line in this image. Its a KTM weekend in Germany and a really great image.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World Motocross Championship

QATAR AND THAILAND

BY GEOFF MEYER - IMAGES BY RAY ARCHER

When I first heard that Qatar and Thailand were going to be on the 2013 FIM World Motocross Championship calendar I knew I had to be at both races. Ad the night race in Qatar and the fact we would see two Superfinals for both races, with MX1 and MX2 combined I just knew this was going to be something special, and at the end of the day that is just what is was.

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Starting in Qatar the whole atmosphere at the races was relaxed and really enjoyable. Riders, mechanics and media all enjoyed early morning swims by the hotel swimming poll, and great food in the restaurants around the city of Doha.

The media and other team members also go to experience the little night life there was in Qatar. Unlike its bigger brother in the Middle East Dubai the smaller city of Qatar is still working up to be something of a party city. A lot of construction is in place for the World Cup in 10 years and while Doha does have some very nice hotels and buildings, it will be something really special in 10 years time. Just make sure they build a bunch of bars for the British fans.

Several bars can be found in Qatar, and if you find a good one the chance of drinking and dancing late into the night is very much an enjoyable experience. Just spending time in temperatures of around 15 to 20 degrees was a nice change for the Motocross circus after our freezing winter.

But what about the event itself, the racing. A 30 minute drive to the circuit from Doha and a little like coming across Sevlievo in Bulgaria this [illegible] is like an Oasis. An amazing facility, well [illegible]

circuit and lighting good enough to have splendid racing.

The riders loved the circuit and that showed in the racing. The Superfinal was truly amazing and for the first time out a huge success. Sure the podium celebrations were not what anyone really enjoyed, with the confusion of the Superfinal, MX1 and MX2, but that was just a small error on Youthstreams part and it won't happen again.

Thailand was also enjoyable, warm weather, another really good facility and really exciting races. The Thai people made us feel welcome and I have to admit I have never seen so much effort put into making the event a really nice experience.

Small grandstands a really nice hillside seating area, bike displays, several different types of food stands, music performances, you name it and Thailand had it. For the MX fan that couldn't get to Thailand you missed out, maybe next year is your chance to enjoy not only the culture of this great country, but also the enthusiasm and big smile of the organizers, which is sometimes missed when visiting a European Grand Prix.

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BANGKOK AND THAILAND

Visiting Thailand was for everyone involved a great experience. Thailand has a rich culture and the busy streets of Bangkok and the beautiful old temples really give this city an amazing atmosphere. I loved the city and talking to many people involved in the Grand Prix that feeling was shared. Here Kevin Strijbos posses for the Ray Archer camer.

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TOMMY SEARLE IN QATAR AND THAILAND

IMAGE RAY ARCHER STORY GEOFF MEYER

British rider Tommy Searle of the Monster Energy Kawasaki team has started the 2013 season with some good results. Having shown good speed on the 450cc machine in MXoN in previous years nobody doubted the former MX2 runner-up could come into the bigger class and be competitive. In Qatar and Thailand he was consistent without being really impressive, but those days will come as he heads to circuits like Sevlievo and Matterley Basin.

Motocross Illustrated: Tommy, how did you enjoy the travelling to Qatar and Thailand?

Searle: It was good, I enjoyed the whole team weeks ever since we landed in Qatar. The good weather and chilling out by the pool, I have had my friends around me, Jamie and Naomi Dobb also have been helping me all the time and Mel Pocock and James Cottrell and we have just hung out. The racing in Qatar and Thailand was good. Thailand was a new experience for me

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because I have never been to this part of the World. Obviously the heat in Thailand was a little tough, but if you drink enough fluids and take care of yourself. The travel I have loved. They are talking about maybe going back to Japan and also Australia, so I think that is good. I like these overseas races, and the setup in Qatar how professional it was, it was nice to be around this scene.

Motocross Illustrated: It was pretty hot in Thailand, but you have obviously raced in that type of weather in America or not?

Searle: Actually the heat in America is a lot worse than it was in Thailand, but in America you have just the single day on the Saturday while in the Grand Prix its two days, you wake up and you feel a little tired and sluggish, I had to get my head around that. If you get a bad start in the MX1 moto and you get a face full of mud and it's so dry, you needed a good start in Thailand for sure.

Motocross Illustrated: In both Qatar and Thailand your speed looked good, you looked solid. How did you feel about it? What can you improve?

Searle: I know what I can do on a bike and I am not worries about my speed. Saturday I didn't have a good start and I should be passing the guys quicker, just like I did in MX2 last year, if I got a bad start in MX2 I just passed them and I need to get that mentality in MX1. I mean there are a lot of good guys, but I feel I am a better talent and a better rider than some guys in front of me.

Motocross Illustrated: What about the Superfinal, how did you find that and what do you think of the new system?

Searle: I don't mind the Superfinal as an MX1 rider, but I can understand that for the MX2 guys it's tough. The MX2 class is a good stepping-stone for the younger riders and I don't want to see that go away. A lot of the younger guys in the MX2 class have not even been on a podium, and while Jeffrey can race for a win in the Supefinal, if it's on the right sort of circuit, but these younger guys are struggling. These guys are battling for 15th place and if they are third in the MX2 class, and then it's tough. For the MX1 guys the Superfinal wasn't a problem, but I have my question marks and I can see why they are doing it, but I liked it before, just MX1 and MX2 apart.

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French kid
2013 FIM W
ner holds

WETERING MX TEAM
SUNORA
BOS

OMAIN FEBVRE
RIGHT FUTURE

l Romain Febvre has really turned some head in his quest to be a top three guy in the World MX2 Championships. The former Supermoto and European Championship win- down a solid second place in the series point behind strong favourite Jeffrey Herlings.

STORY BY DAVE BULMER
IMAGES RAY ARCHER

Vurbmoto writer David Bulmer caught up with Febvre at the Grand Prix of Thailand.

Q: Romain, another podium but you managed to improve by one spot, how's it feel?

Febvre: I feel very good at the moment. It's my second podium. I had one podium in Qatar - third place and now second place. I hope all the weekend's are like this. It's pretty difficult but I can do it and now I see that I can do it, there's no reason why every race won't be like this.

Q: You seem to have really stepped up this year from your results last year. Have you really been working hard in the off-season?

Febvre: Yeah, last year the first GP is very difficult because you have a big difference between EMX2 and the MX2 GP. You have a big difference and it was very difficult for me. But I've been working very hard for my speed, for my physical condition on the bike. After the GP of France last year I get faster and faster. And then after I finish in Italy fifth overall, for my first series it's really good. This year, this winter I know I can go faster and I can do better. I worked with my new team very hard this winter. The Wilvo Nestaan JM Racing KTM team is from Belgium. My hardest type of track is a sandy track. In Belgium every track is sand so I ride every week in the sand, to improve physically and also for my technique it's the best.

Q: Your name might be familiar to a few of our American readers. You went to Mini O's a couple years ago. Why did you go and how was that experience?

Febvre: I go because some friends go every year to Mini O's. For me he said "come with me, just for holiday." And after he said, "maybe you can ride…" So I rode on Supercross track for three days and Motocross for three days. But Supercross for me it's like, I've never seen the big jumps like that and for me it's so difficult. But on the Motocross, the riders are fast but not very fast. I finish fifth one race and I crash the other race. And now you have Justin Hill and Jessy Nelson, he rode with me at Mini O's and now he rides on the Lites. It's pretty cool to see. In Supercross for me it was impossible to keep the speed as high as those riders but it was a good experience.

Q: What do you think of the event as a whole? All the people. What was that like? Is that the biggest race you've ever been to?

Febvre: Yeah, it's the biggest race I've ever seen. 1,200 riders for the Supercross maybe and 2,000 for the Motocross. You see the small guys on the 50 jump and scrub and you know after he's fast. The biggest surprise for me was Adam Cianciarulo on the 85. On the Supercross he was unbelievable for me. When I saw him in the whoops section, I was going through double-double-double and he comes and he goes braaaaap, full throttle. It's unbelievable.

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TORSTEN HALLMAN

STORY BY GEOFF MEYER

Torsten Hallman is truly one of the great men of the sport of Motocross. A four times World Motocross Champion and the first Grand Prix rider to head to America and show the American Motocross riders what was possible. Hallman was also the founder of THOR clothing and sold the company many years ago. We caught up with Mr Hallman as he enjoyed visiting the Grand Prix of Thailand last week.

Motocross Illustrated: Torsten, thanks for your time. What brought you to the Grand Prix of Thailand?

Hallman: Kent Ohlin is a good friend of mine and they opening a factory in Thailand and I was invited and also we came here to play golf, so it was a good occasion to play some golf, open the Ohlins factory and also the Grand Prix. I was so happy to see the races.

Motocross Illustrated: Can you tell me about the Award you received from the FIM back at the end of 2012?

Hallman: It was a big occasion for me and good memory for me, because it was 50 years ago that I was World Motocross Champion for the first time, and to be invited to the FIM Gala was a big thing for me. Of course I had been to several before, but that was maybe 46 years ago. It was a really nice presentation and I got to give all the World Champions to the Motocross World Champions and also the Supermoto and Freestyle World Champions, plus the American Supercross Champion and I was honoured to give that award to Ryan Villopoto, who is my long time favourite rider.

Motocross Illustrated: I know I have not seen you at many races in recent years. Do you keep in contact with the sport much?

Hallman: I check daily on the internet, and of course I follow MXlarge and I look at all the Grand Prixs via live television. I also follow Supercross in America. I am very active in these things, but it has been more lately, I was always too involved in my business interests, I had several businesses in all areas and this took all my time. I didn't have time for the races and this year I will go to Sweden, Finland and of course also Thailand, which I enjoyed very much. I had problems with my heart, I had so much stress in my business years and I had two heart attaches, so I take it easy now, but it gives me more time to get to the races and less time to work in my business.

Motocross Illustrated: As somebody who follows both AMA and FIM, what is your opinion of the two series? I get the feeling that the Grand Prix riders are catching up to the AMA riders.

Hallman: I think you are right, Antonio Cairoli can race with the best American rider and for sure the GP riders are catching up and that is good.

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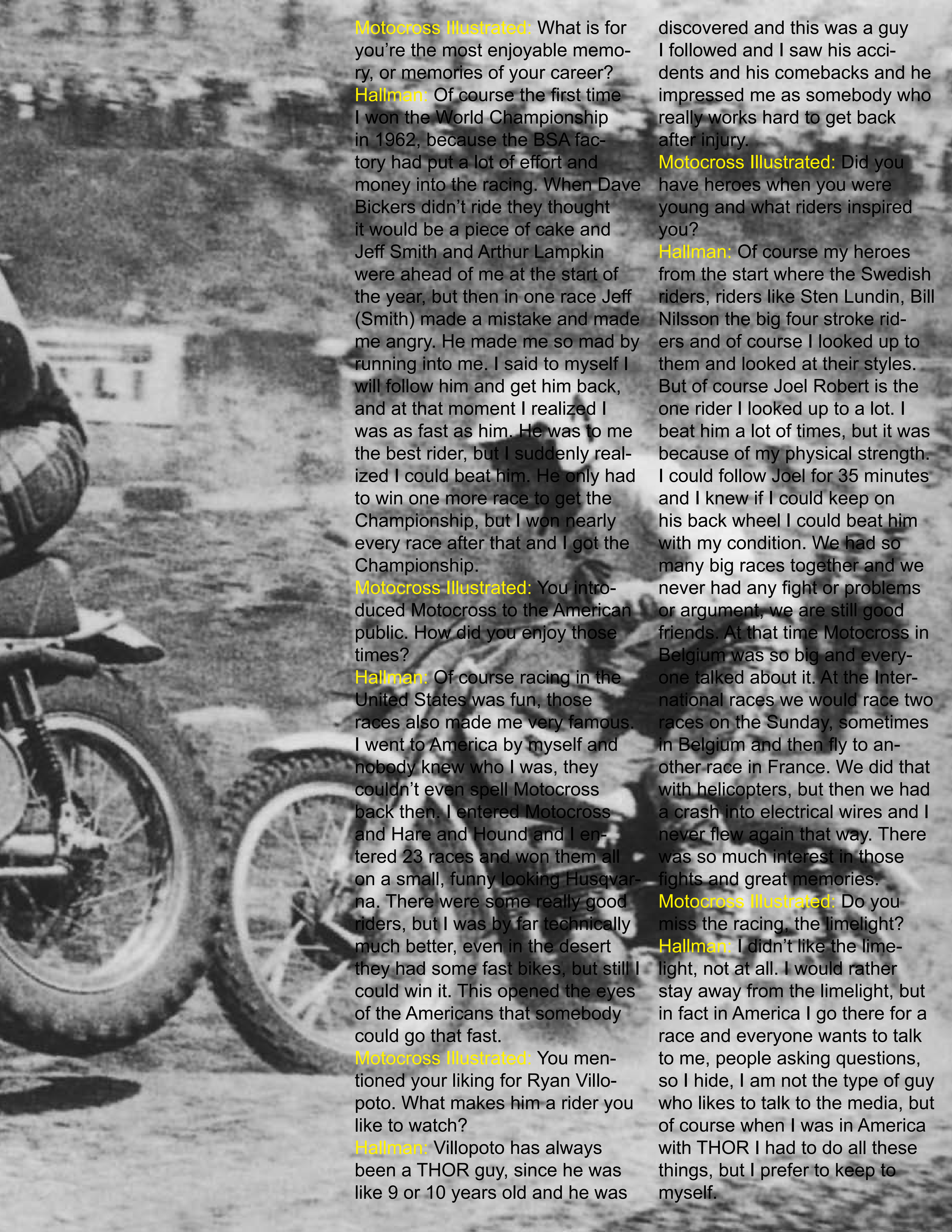

Motocross Illustrated: What is for you're the most enjoyable memory, or memories of your career?

Hallman: Of course the first time I won the World Championship in 1962, because the BSA factory had put a lot of effort and money into the racing. When Dave Bickers didn't ride they thought it would be a piece of cake and Jeff Smith and Arthur Lampkin were ahead of me at the start of the year, but then in one race Jeff (Smith) made a mistake and made me angry. He made me so mad by running into me. I said to myself I will follow him and get him back, and at that moment I realized I was as fast as him. He was to me the best rider, but I suddenly realized I could beat him. He only had to win one more race to get the Championship, but I won nearly every race after that and I got the Championship.

Motocross Illustrated: You introduced Motocross to the American public. How did you enjoy those times?

Hallman: Of course racing in the United States was fun, those races also made me very famous. I went to America by myself and nobody knew who I was, they couldn't even spell Motocross back then. I entered Motocross and Hare and Hound and I entered 23 races and won them all on a small, funny looking Husqvarna. There were some really good riders, but I was by far technically much better, even in the desert they had some fast bikes, but still I could win it. This opened the eyes of the Americans that somebody could go that fast.

Motocross Illustrated: You mentioned your liking for Ryan Villopoto. What makes him a rider you like to watch?

Hallman: Villopoto has always been a THOR guy, since he was like 9 or 10 years old and he was discovered and this was a guy I followed and I saw his accidents and his comebacks and he impressed me as somebody who really works hard to get back after injury.

Motocross Illustrated: Did you have heroes when you were young and what riders inspired you?

Hallman: Of course my heroes from the start where the Swedish riders, riders like Sten Lundin, Bill Nilsson the big four stroke riders and of course I looked up to them and looked at their styles. But of course Joel Robert is the one rider I looked up to a lot. I beat him a lot of times, but it was because of my physical strength. I could follow Joel for 35 minutes and I knew if I could keep on his back wheel I could beat him with my condition. We had so many big races together and we never had any fight or problems or argument, we are still good friends. At that time Motocross in Belgium was so big and everyone talked about it. At the International races we would race two races on the Sunday, sometimes in Belgium and then fly to another race in France. We did that with helicopters, but then we had a crash into electrical wires and I never flew again that way. There was so much interest in those fights and great memories.

Motocross Illustrated: Do you miss the racing, the limelight?

Hallman: I didn't like the limelight, not at all. I would rather stay away from the limelight, but in fact in America I go there for a race and everyone wants to talk to me, people asking questions, so I hide, I am not the type of guy who likes to talk to the media, but of course when I was in America with THOR I had to do all these things, but I prefer to keep to myself.

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José Butron | MX2 World Championship
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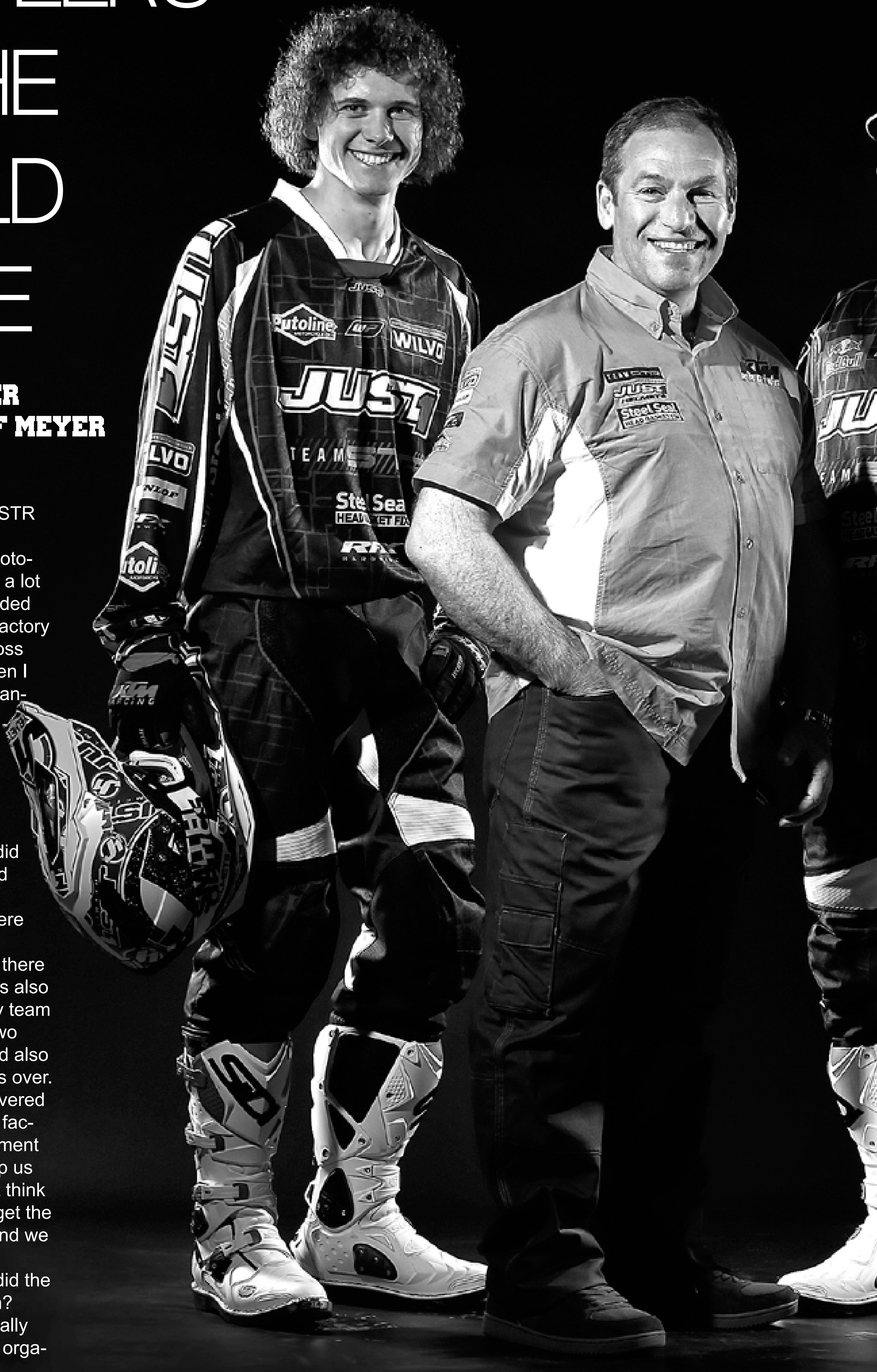
PRIVATEERS ON THE WORLD SCENE

IMAGE RAY ARCHER
INTERVIEW GEOFF MEYER



Steve Turner from the STR KTM team knows that being involved in the FIM World Motocross Championship means a lot of money and miles are needed to compete with the bigger factory teams. He loves his Motocross as much as anyone and when I asked him why he did it the answer was simple.

“Why does anyone do what they love doing. It is a passion and being involved at this level gives a lot of satisfaction.”

Motocross Illustrated: How did you find the whole Qatar and Thailand experience?

Turner: It was good to be there and come to these types of countries, it’s different to be there and meet the people, but it is also bloody expensive. It cost my team maybe 25,000euro for the two races with hotels, flights, and also the cost of bringing the bikes over. We don’t get those costs covered like the big teams gets. The factory boys get that. The argument is that the factory teams help us with some things, but I don’t think it is 100% correct that they get the support from Youthstream and we don’t.

Motocross Illustrated: How did the events go off in your opinion?

Turner: Both events were really good, you cannot knock the orga-

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nization of both events I enjoyed them both a lot, sometimes the information is a bit slow coming through with the new rules. We had one moment that James Law finished 17th in an MX1 moto, so we thought maybe he would get through to the superfinal, but then two of the top ten failed to finish and got in through their top ten position in the GP of Qatar. So he had to go into the last chance qualifier.

Motocross Illustrated: What about the Superfinal?

Turner: I fully understand why Youthstream want to do it. I mean if you watched the races you had bar banging action from the front of the field to the back, it was really impressive. For television it is fantastic and if we need to have it for more sponsorship and more exposure then great. As for the riders, it's tough for the MX2 boys, a few riders can fight with MX1 boys, but the bikes have different lines. You might have an MX2 guy in top three and running 15th in the race and he's getting no exposure and I think that is the biggest problem they have.

Motocross Illustrated: You run both the Maxxis and the GP series. Which one is more important for you?

Turner: For me personally the one place where I want to do well in is the Grand Prixs, because we are a Grand Prix team, but you also have to think about sponsors and KTM in UK help a lot and they want us to do the British Championship, and we want to do the Maxxis, but the more GPs we see the less chance of doing the Maxxis, I don't know how much longer we can do both.

Motocross Illustrated: How did you team do in Thailand?

Turner: Jamie Law rode much better than last week and deserved his four points. He was really unlucky not to automatically qualify for the Super-Final, but "rules are rules" as they say. "Jonathan Barragan showed great speed throughout, but made too many mistakes. If he can cut those errors, he will be up there with the front guys.

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ADVENTURE IN QATAR AND THAILAND

David Bulmer is very much an interesting type of young man. An extravert and introvert all rolled into one and a man who looks for adventure in every possible place. Bulmer who works for Vurbmoto in America and also does the odd job for MXlarge and Motocross Illustrated has been around the sport now for five years. In that five years he has found himself in the very same position that most people would dream of.

CARLOS AGUIRRE IMAGE STORY BY DAVID BULMER

A month ago Bulmer jumped on a train in London, and he made his way to Thailand, visiting Russia, Mongolia, Vietnam, and many other amazing places. He grew a beard, lived at times like a homeless person and enjoyed every moment of it. Here is his adventure once he had made it to the Grand Prix of Thailand and Qatar.

It had been a month since I left England; I arrived at the destination I had been seeking for over 10,000 miles - the Thailand GP track at Si Racha. Originally I had planned on doing the final leg of my trip (Bangkok to the track) by a combination of train and tuk-tuk/taxi but I'm pretty glad that instead, I hitched a ride with GP promoter Kraitos Wongsawan and his friends because there is no way in hell I'd have found this place.

Information about the track was scarce, a decision made in order to stop locals from "popping in" and getting in the way during preparations. About the only thing I knew was that it was located in an industrial estate, a fact that wasn't exactly filling me with confidence when heading towards.

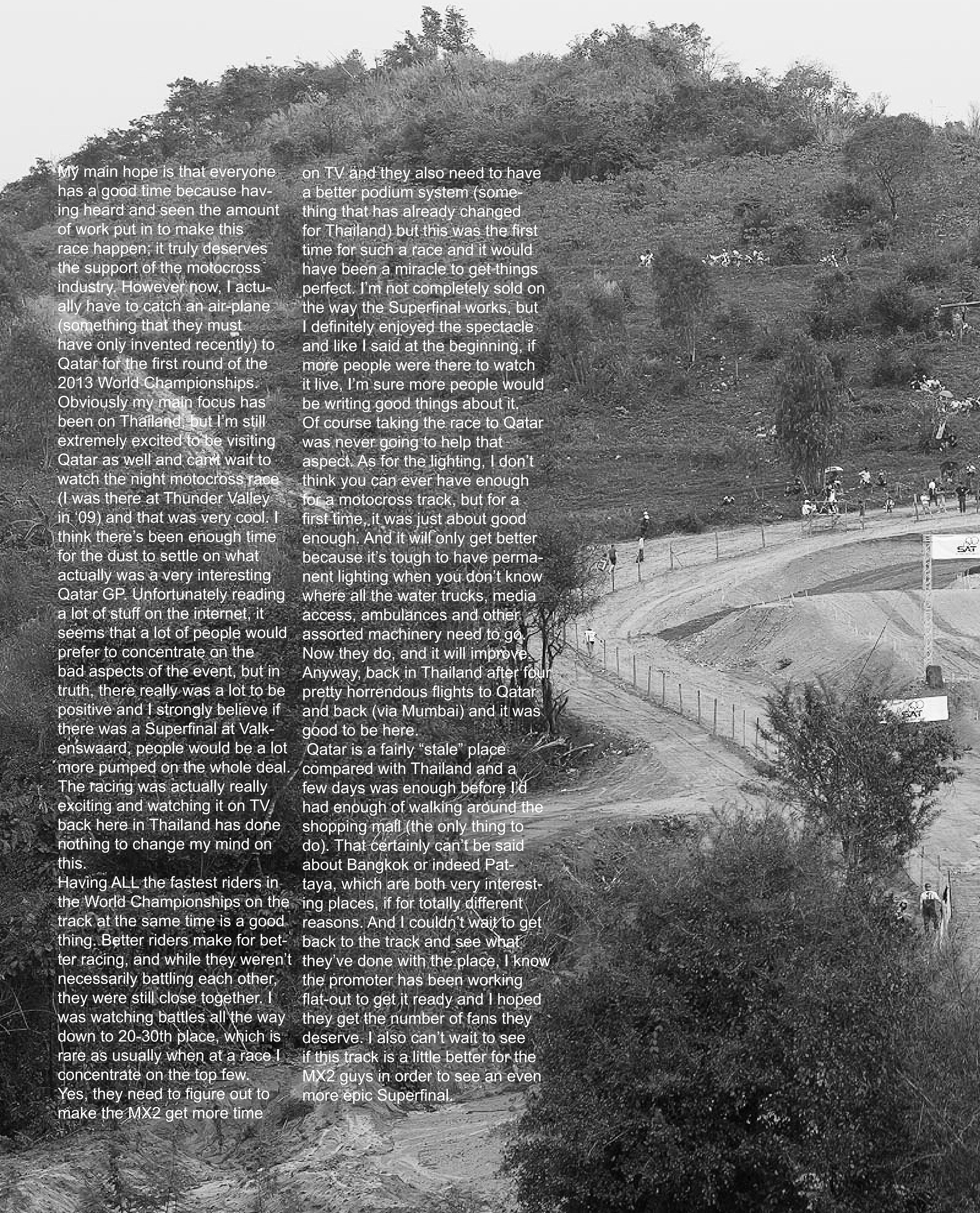
My experience of motocross industrial estate tracks starts and ends with Lommel, and while Lommel is a gnarly track in its own right, the place isn't exactly a great venue for a motocross track. Thankfully, we drove through the industrial estate and into the foothills out back where before me lay the makings of a track, better than I'd hoped possible. I say makings because in no way was it anywhere near completed.

Ok, so the layout was in place and most of the obstacles were doable, but the whole track still needs a massive makeover before the GP. Which is why I was glad to see Greg Atkins (Youthstream's top track guy) already there, trying to get the ball rolling. I don't chat with Greg too often, but when I do, it's usually waaay before an event when things are most definitely in the planning stage of things, and together with Justin Barclay, we have a tradition to get them in our MXoN preview video.

But probably the coolest thing about the day, and indeed about most of time in Thailand, is the awesome people I've met. I mentioned Kraitos above, and he's been really great, taking me out to dinner and drinks in some of the better places in town.

Ton Wikran is Thailand's top photographer and I must thank him for the pictures he's taken of me during these past few days. It was also cool to meet a couple of the Thai riders at the track and speak with them about racing, the nations and even the Mongolian track that I'd visited previously on my trip.

Best wishes go out to Trakarn Thangthong who after taking off my GoPro, crashed a couple of laps later and broke his leg. He was planning on racing the GP so it was extremely bad luck to do it so close to the race. Overall though, I'm pumped on the track and how I believe it can look with two solid weeks of work behind it, and even next year (if it holds one again) because then things will really be bedded in a lot better.



My main hope is that everyone has a good time because having heard and seen the amount of work put in to make this race happen; it truly deserves the support of the motocross industry. However now, I actually have to catch an air-plane (something that they must have only invented recently) to Qatar for the first round of the 2013 World Championships.

Obviously my main focus has been on Thailand, but I'm still extremely excited to be visiting Qatar as well and can't wait to watch the night motocross race (I was there at Thunder Valley in '09) and that was very cool. I think there's been enough time for the dust to settle on what actually was a very interesting Qatar GP. Unfortunately reading a lot of stuff on the internet, it seems that a lot of people would prefer to concentrate on the bad aspects of the event, but in truth, there really was a lot to be positive and I strongly believe if there was a Superfinal at Valkenswaard, people would be a lot more pumped on the whole deal.

The racing was actually really exciting and watching it on TV back here in Thailand has done nothing to change my mind on this.

Having ALL the fastest riders in the World Championships on the track at the same time is a good thing. Better riders make for better racing, and while they weren't necessarily battling each other, they were still close together. I was watching battles all the way down to 20-30th place, which is rare as usually when at a race I concentrate on the top few.

Yes, they need to figure out to make the MX2 get more time on TV and they also need to have a better podium system (something that has already changed for Thailand) but this was the first time for such a race and it would have been a miracle to get things perfect. I'm not completely sold on the way the Superfinal works, but I definitely enjoyed the spectacle and like I said at the beginning, if more people were there to watch it live, I'm sure more people would be writing good things about it.

Of course taking the race to Qatar was never going to help that aspect. As for the lighting, I don't think you can ever have enough for a motocross track, but for a first time, it was just about good enough. And it will only get better because it's tough to have permanent lighting when you don't know where all the water trucks, media access, ambulances and other assorted machinery need to go. Now they do, and it will improve.

Anyway, back in Thailand after four pretty horrendous flights to Qatar and back (via Mumbai) and it was good to be here.

Qatar is a fairly "stale" place compared with Thailand and a few days was enough before I'd had enough of walking around the shopping mall (the only thing to do). That certainly can't be said about Bangkok or indeed Pattaya, which are both very interesting places, if for totally different reasons. And I couldn't wait to get back to the track and see what they've done with the place, I know the promoter has been working flat-out to get it ready and I hoped they get the number of fans they deserve. I also can't wait to see if this track is a little better for the MX2 guys in order to see an even more epic Superfinal.

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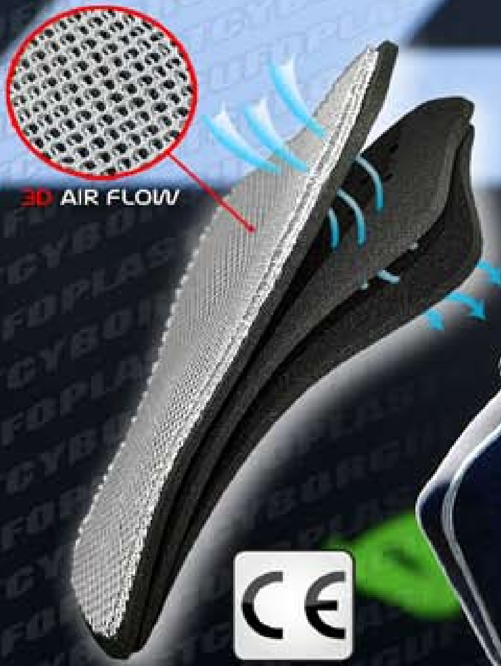

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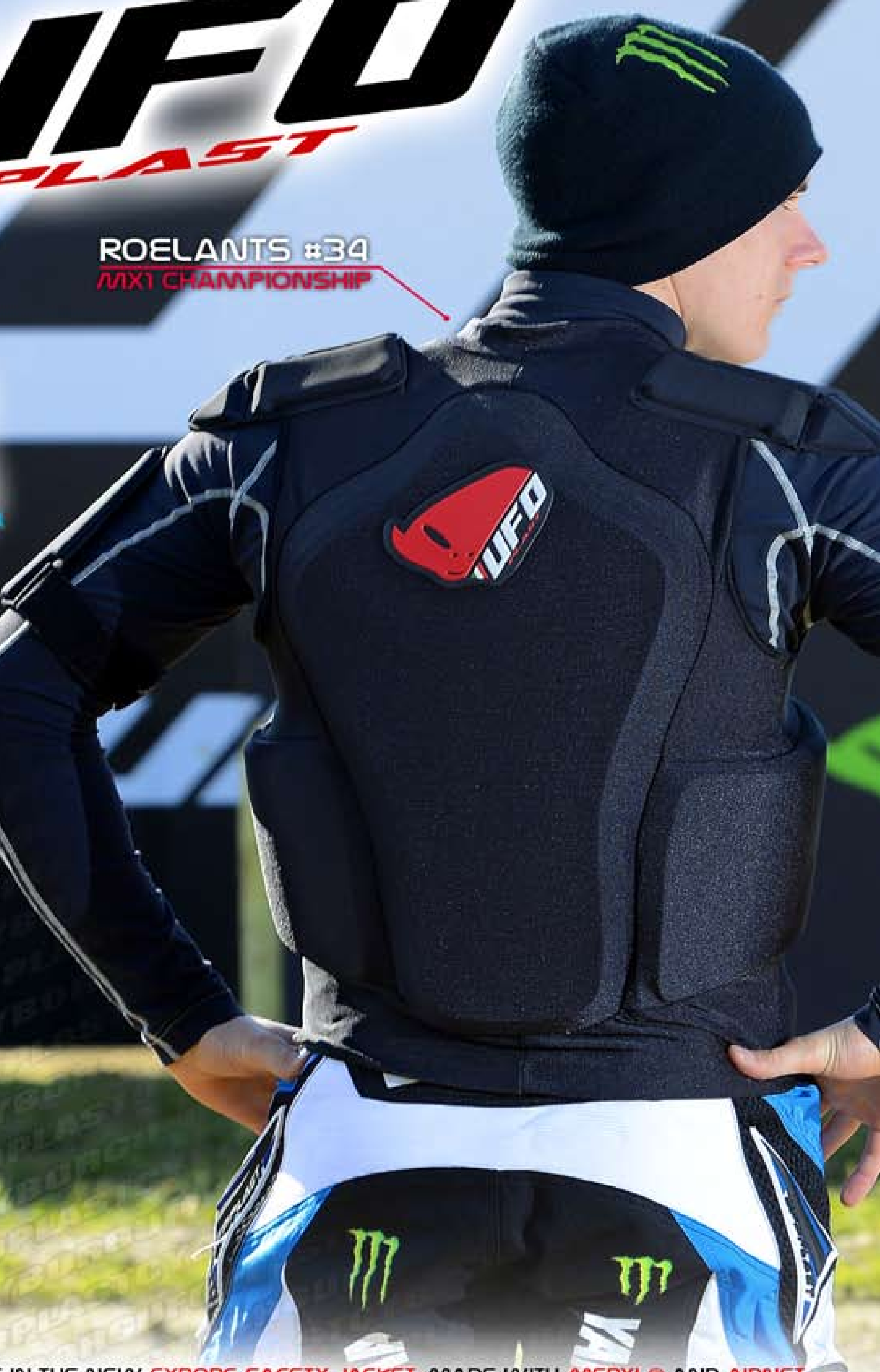
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SIMON CUDBY IMAGE

Red Bull KTM Factory rider Marvin Musquin delivered a great result in the SX 250 and 450 classes at the Daytona Raceway last Saturday night. The Frenchman took his first 250SX Supercross career win at the fourth round of the East Coast Championship.
Musquin was placed in heat number one where he got off to a third place start as the riders rounded the first corner. He made a pass on Vince Friese for second place on lap two of the heat and held his position easily transfer to the main event.
When the gate dropped for the main event, Musquin put his KTM 250 SX-F up front early, grabbed the holeshot to lead the first lap before concentrating on stretching his lead. He went on to lead throughout the 15-lap main event to claim his first 250SX career win. Musquin crossed the line eight seconds ahead of his competition even after celebrating with a fun heel-clicker.
“Obviously I had a lot of fun riding this track,” commented Musquin after the race. “I knew everyone was going to be fast so I stayed calm out front and tried to have fun. I am so happy to get this win and to also gain more confidence knowing that I was pulling away from them each lap.” Musquin’s win at Daytona moves him up one position in the overall point standings to third overall.

MAX ANSTIE UP AND DOWN IN THAILAND

STORY AND IMAGE BY SUZUKI

Rockstar Energy Suzuki Europe’s Max Anstie came a little closer to his maiden trophy on the factory-backed RM-Z250 as he registered a positive third position in the first MX2 moto for the Grand Prix of Thailand and the inaugural visit to the country for what was the second round of the FIM Motocross World Championship.

Unbearable heat created extremely difficult racing conditions at Si Racha. Mercifully cloudy conditions on Sunday nullified some of the intensity from the sun but the humidity and temperatures touching almost 35 degrees meant the Thai Grand Prix was a tough outing and watching for the 17,000 crowd.

Anstie rode strongly in the first MX2 outing and some consistent speed on his RM-Z 250 pulled him up to a comfortable third place. The Brit then faced the second Superfinal of 2013 and up against 450cc machinery was overwhelmed by the frantic intensity of the opening laps. The youngster has been trying to shake off effects of his crash at Losail the previous Saturday and the combination of the physical handicap and the poor start meant the chance of a trophy and spray of champagne slipped away with a lowly 31st spot and ninth overall.

“Since last week I’ve been trying to sort myself out a little bit because I’ve been taking painkillers after the crash in Qatar. I pushed hard in the first moto and made it happen but in the second one against the 450s it was a struggle. It was dodgy on the first lap and I hit a couple of 450s when they almost landed on me. I was way, way back. I pushed again but it didn’t come together. I didn’t put myself in a good position to do the job. It was a shame but we’re making improvements and third place in the first moto is alright. I still don’t feel 100% and where I should be and I’ve had a couple of big crashes in the last two weeks. We’ve got three weeks now before Valkenswaard and we’ll be strong and see what happens. We’ve done everything we possibly can but the results aren’t coming...yet!”

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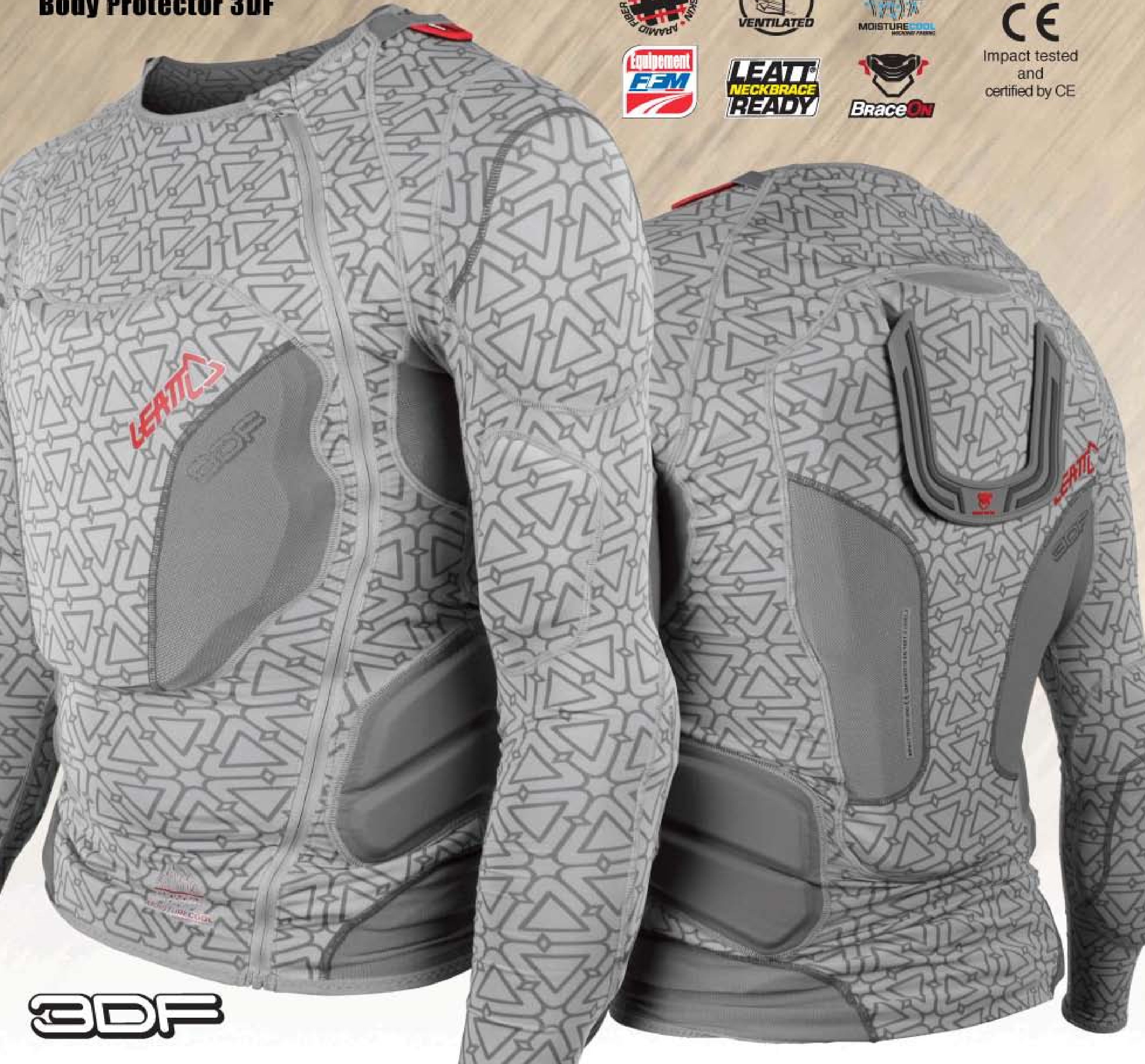

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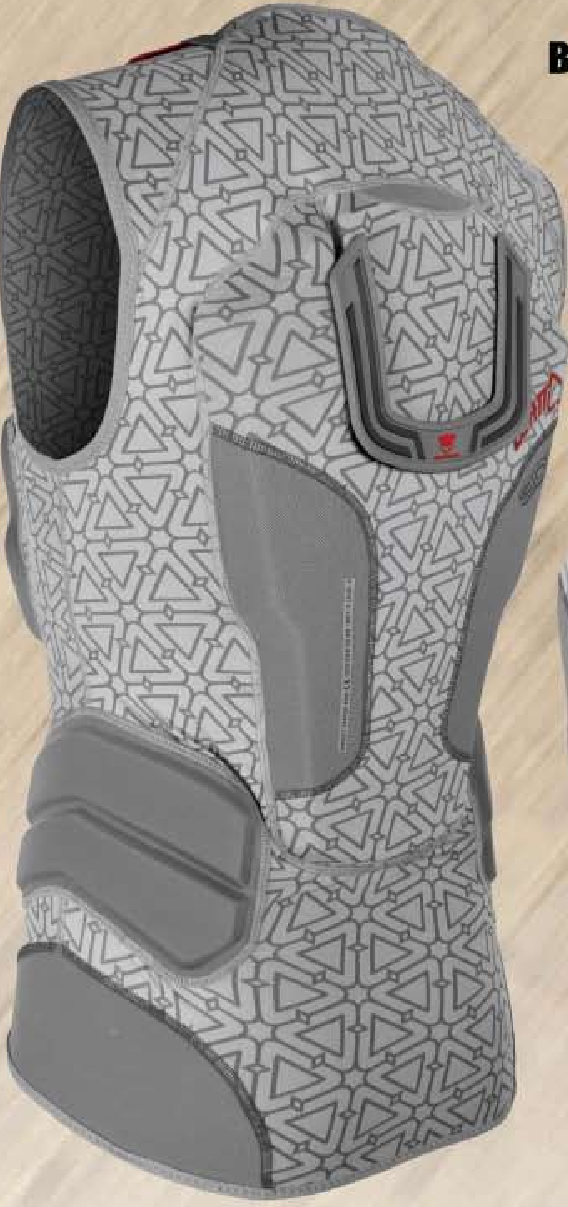

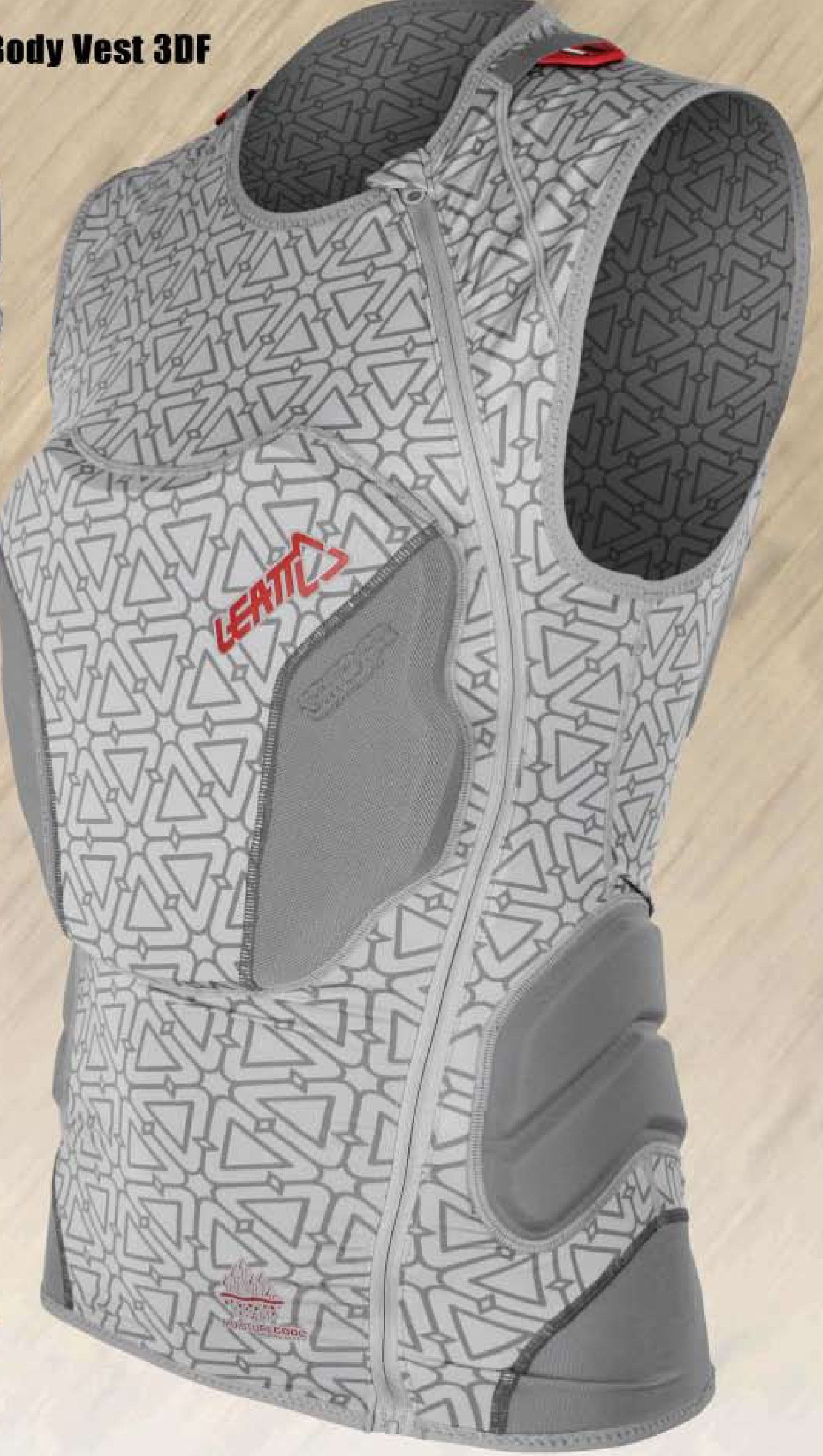

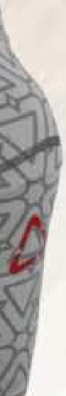

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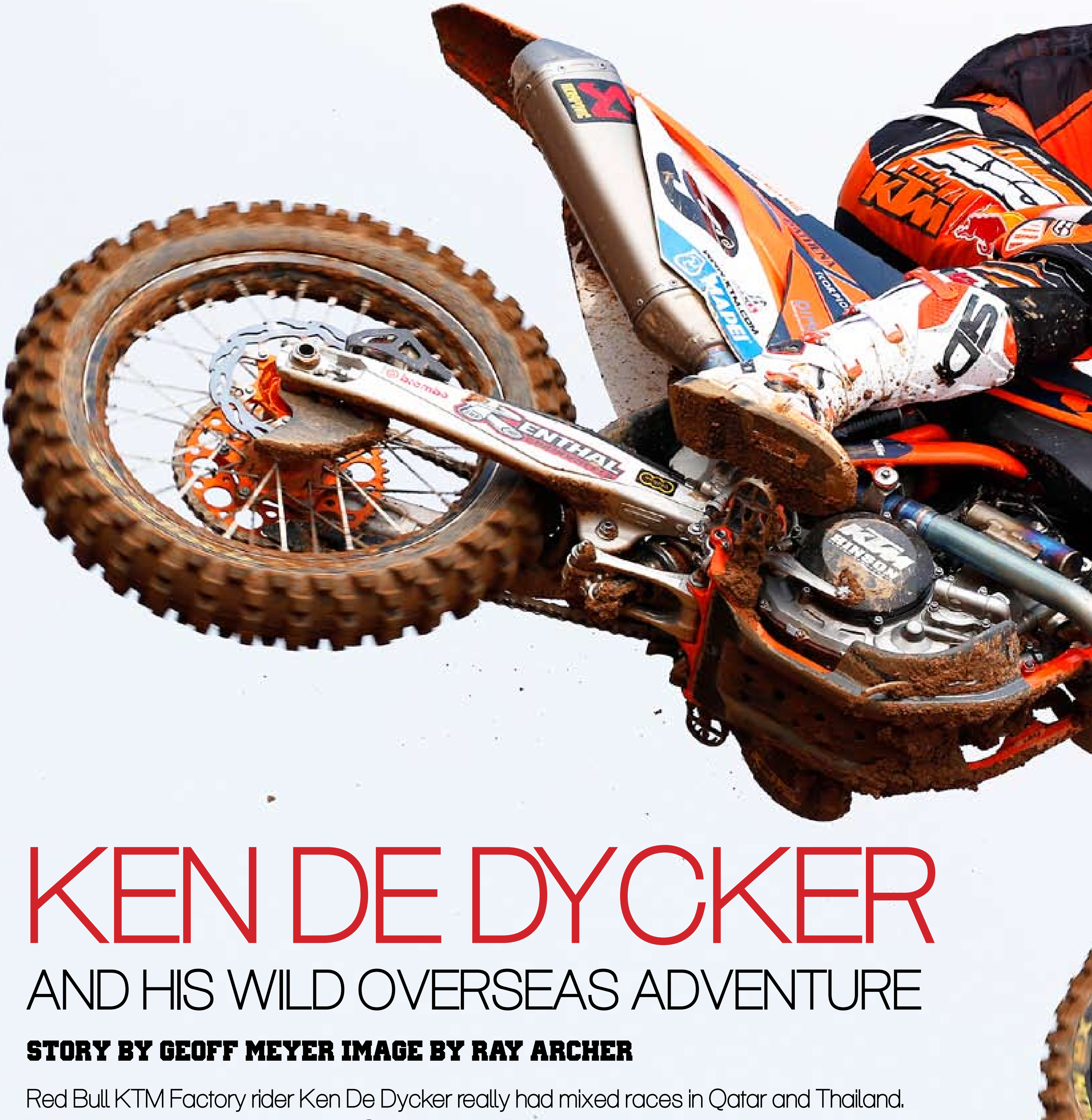


KEN DE DYCKER

AND HIS WILD OVERSEAS ADVENTURE

STORY BY GEOFF MEYER IMAGE BY RAY ARCHER

Red Bull KTM Factory rider Ken De Dycker really had mixed races in Qatar and Thailand. Due to the extreme intensity of the Superfinal the Belgian rider struggled with crashes and bad starts, yet in his other motos he was often the second best guy behind his team-mate Antonio Cairoli. We asked De Dycker about his two weeks in Qatar and Thailand and what he felt of the Superfinal.

Motocross Illustrated: Ken, how did you find the two weeks away?

De Dycker: The travelling going to Qatar was not a problem, just a five or six hour flight from my home, so that was okay, you had to eat different and getting up early. I found it a bit hard, because I was sick two or three weeks before Qatar and I didn't have high expectations. In Thailand I felt I could do better. I mean for me the Superfinal just doesn't work out so far. I make too many mistakes in the first laps and crash, while in the qualification heats and the MX1 motos I did well.

Motocross Illustrated: You seemed to struggle a little in the Superfinal; while you're other races you looked really strong.

De Dycker: The Superfinal was really rough for me, the one in Thailand the first two corners I crashed into three or four guys, something like five guys in a corner and it is pretty hard if you don't have a good start. I had two or three times a coming together with somebody, hitting MX1 and MX2 riders. I could come back well, but I needed to get a good start to run up front.

Motocross Illustrated: In saying that your speed was good, and you must be confident for Valkenswaard?

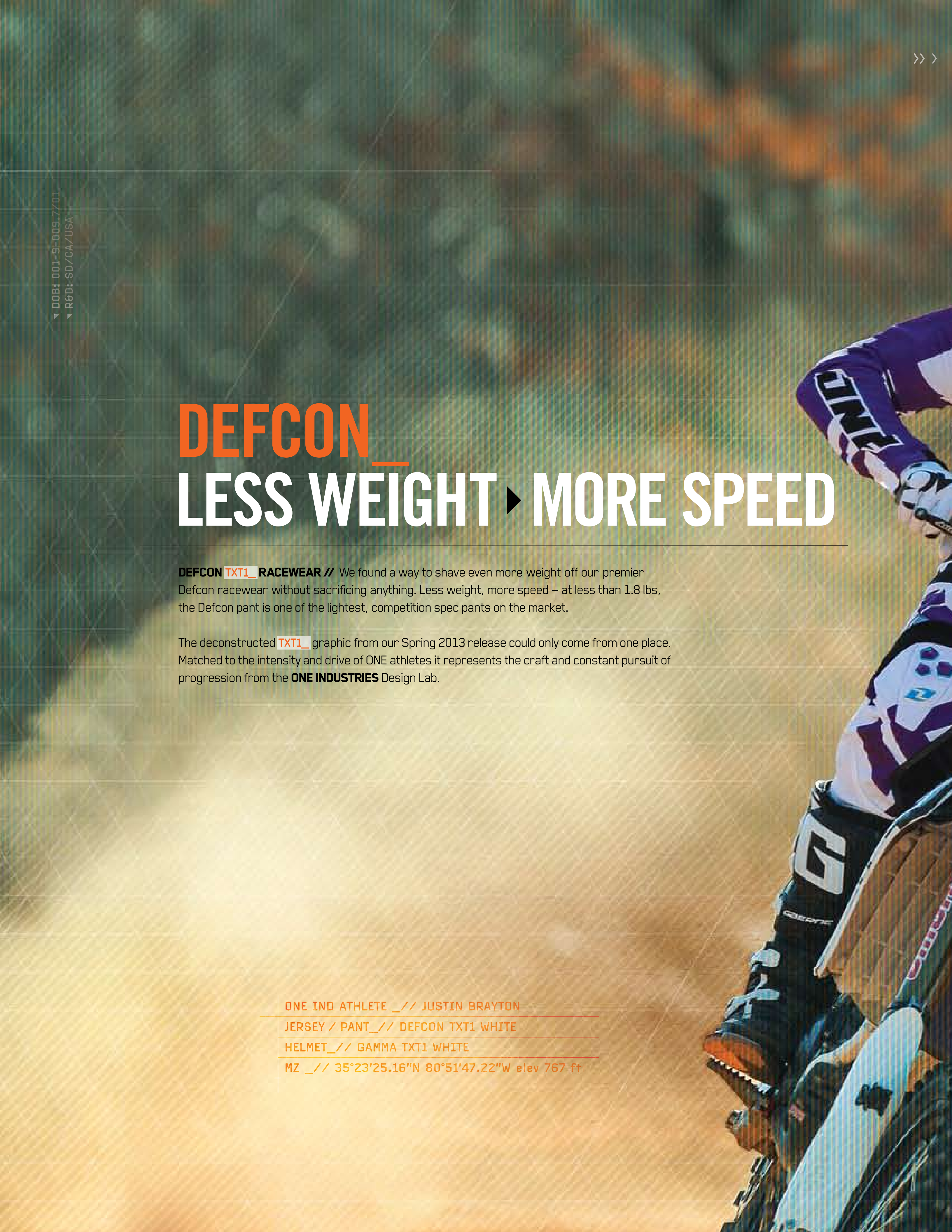
De Dycker: I am satisfied, for these two races it feels like the season has not started yet. I mean we went to two races with the Superfinal and that feels weird. For me I will be more ready for Valkenswaard and I hope there I can do two good motos like I have done in the MX1 motos in Qatar and Thailand.

Motocross Illustrated: How did you go with the travel, some riders liked it, but how did you see it?

De Dycker: I am not sure how I see the travelling. I mean you need to train during the week and that was difficult because we didn't have a bike and you need to find the training facilities at the hotel or wherever. Also eating can sometimes be difficult in those countries. For me it is a bit difficult, I mean eating in Thailand was not so great for me, but Qatar was okay, a bit more like at home.

Motocross Illustrated: You mentioned in the preseason that your speed was similar to Antonio and you showed that was the case. Can you beat Antonio in Valkenswaard? That is a track you have ridden well at in the past.

De Dycker: It seems like Antonio and I are riding well together in the qualification races and MX1 motos and I think I can do really well and stay with him in Valkenswaard and maybe beat him. I just want two good motos are each round now and see what happened.



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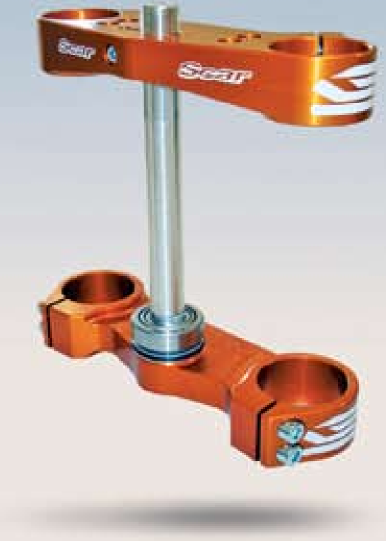

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evgeny bobryshev
the speed is there

STORY JENNI DICK IMAGE SARAH GUTIERREZ

Evgeny Bobryshev has looked a little like the Russian charge of the 2012 season, showing top five finishes in qualification and Sunday main events and as we speak he holds down eighth place in the MX1 series points. At the Grand Prix of Thailand Bobryshev looked solid, but a 14th place overall was far from what he had hoped for.

"In the first race I had such a good start, and came to the inside with Tony. After half a lap he made a little mistake, so I passed him and I was feeling good with the track, while finding some nice lines. I pulled away a little, but I made a mistake, as I hit a rock in the track, which made me lose the front. The crash broke my rhythm, but I was still in third and everything was going fine, with a good speed. In the last few laps I felt so hot, which made it really hard to concentrate. I knew Desalle was coming, so I tried to increase the speed a bit, but that was a mistake. My body was tired, and I didn't listen like I normally do. I tried too hard and gave everything I had left, so when I hit an impact on the front in the last few laps, I had no power left, and I felt really dazed. I went into a corner and ran on, stalling the bike . I was so hot and trying to kick the bike, but by the time I managed to get going, I was a long way back. I was completely empty after the race and feeling a little confused with being so hot. In the second race I had a bad start, but I stayed relaxed, didn't push and was careful, as I didn't have much energy after the first heat. I was happy with the riding, and managing the situation with the weather while making good passes. I was concentrating on a nice flowing rhythm, not pushing and breathing properly, but unfortunately on the last lap my hand came off the bars on the whoops section and I crashed. I winded myself, so I couldn't breathe, and I hit my foot really hard. I got going again to finish 11th in MX1 but overall it's been a massive disappointment today. The team has worked so hard, and all we can do is learn from it; we have some positives to take away, but I need to bring it all back together to get the results. The weather was a real low point for me, but I know physically I am fit, so the following races should be much better."

The Grand Prix of Qatar showed what Bobryshev was capable of as he scored a top five finish. With a new daughter and becoming a father it was noticeable that the Russian was becoming a more rounded rider. "It's was a fairly good day for us. In the first

HONDA
DUNLOP

race I got a good start and I was second behind Strijbos. I tried to pass him, but made a mistake, so I slowed for a few laps before pushing again. Ken got me a little later, so I was third for quite a long time, then in the last few laps I wasn't feeling physically tired, in fact there was definitely more in the tank, but I lost a little concentration. Tony passed me in that time, and when I saw two laps to go I tried to close the gap, but I just couldn't make their speed. In the last lap Paulin managed to get me, which was really disappointing, but fifth place was a decent start to the year. In the second race I got a good start going full gas to the first turn. I was with the top three guys again, but dropped to fourth and the top guys were just a little quicker than me. I have to be happy with the results, because it's a strong start to the season for me after a long time away from racing at the front with those guys. I feel good with the bike and the team, so thanks to everyone for their hard work, and thanks to my wife and new daughter Eva who were watching back home."

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KEN ROCZEN

The German sensation is finally showing the form we all expected from him, and his lead in the West Coast AMA Supercross series is just the start of things to come. With KTM dominating all over the World and the former World MX2 Champions sensational form anything is possible in 2013. Ray Archer image

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EVGENY BOBRYSHEV AND MAX NAGL

The Grand Priux of Qatar was a fgreat stop for the FIM World Motocross Championships and pleasatn moments like this just made the visit even vbetter for the riders. Image by Sarah Gutierrez

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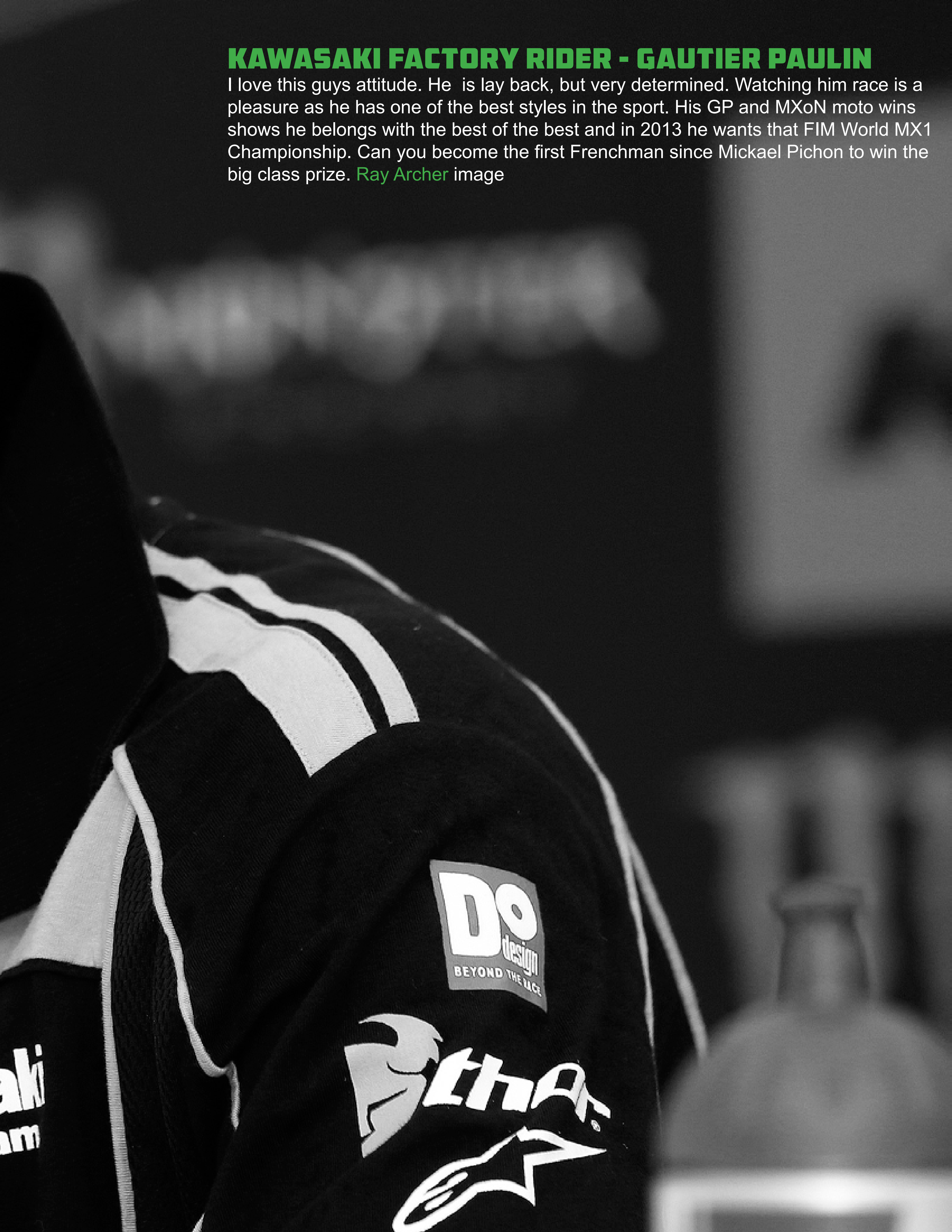
MONSTER ENERGY YAMAHA STEVEN FROSSARD

The Frenchman has so much to offer and hopefully in 2013 that will come to the front of his racing. Injuries have really robbed him of much better results. Monster Energy and Yamaha have a great relationship and while rumors throughout the paddock have Monster picking between Kawasaki or Yamaha in 2014 lets hope the Energy Drink company sticks around for both teams.



KAWASAKI FACTORY RIDER - GAUTIER PAULIN

I love this guys attitude. He is lay back, but very determined. Watching him race is a pleasure as he has one of the best styles in the sport. His GP and MXoN moto wins shows he belongs with the best of the best and in 2013 he wants that FIM World MX1 Championship. Can you become the first Frenchman since Mickael Pichon to win the big class prize. Ray Archer image

Red Bull
KTM
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REDBULL KTM FACTORY TEAM

They come in numbers and usually leave with the victories. When you talk Factory teams there is just one, in the World and this is the team. While Yamaha, Suzuki, TM, Kawasaki and Honda have good support from the Japanese and Italians the Austrian company is head and shoulders above the rest. Its a tough sport and when you are fighting against the euro and technical experience nobody can compete with the Orange Army. Ray Archer image

TOP TEN THINGS

GRAND PRIX OF THAILAND

STORY GEOFF MEYER IMAGE RAY ARCHER

1. Promoters and YS. The local Thai promotional group should be rewarded with the 2016 Motocross of Nations for this amazing presentation. A magnificent circuit, great watering of the circuit, well prepared for the races, nice area for fans to sit and watch the racing. Grandstands, nice display area led by Honda and KTM for the public. Hey, they even had two McDonalds for food, one based near the paddock and another mobile service that rode around the track. Air conditioned toilets around the facility was also a first. Should be mentioned that the Youthstream and locals crews worked from dawn until dust, long days and short nights. Respect!!!

2. Jeffrey Herlings. Got to love this kid, he just gets on with the job and that is why he will one day win many FIM World Motocross Championships. Despite wanting to win everything he enters, and thriving on that feeling of winning, he is fighting an uphill battle against the MX1 bikes in the Superfinal. His charge through from around 10th place to be battling Clement Desalle for third place was epic Motocross. I loved every minute of his charge and everyone in attendance should have. By the end of the season this guy's speed will be frightening.

3. Antonio Cairoli. Like his Red Bull KTM Team mate Mr Cairoli is mister positive. Unlike his rival Mr. Desalle who complains about everything and anything the Italian just does what he has to do. If something bothers him he finds a way to beat it, be it a new track, a faster rival or a bad start. Just like De Coster and Everts before him Antonio Cairoli is giving this sport more than we will ever understand. Cairoli is a glass is half full type of guy and I like people with that mentality.

4. Romain Febvre. Is he the find of the season. What a talented rider and what an amazing story. A short time ago he was a supermoto rider, now in full swing in the MX2 World Championship he shows so much potential. While Herlings is riding off into the distance the Frenchman is learning his trade and his Superfinal showing was also impressive.

5. Mechanics. The real workers of the Grand Prix series. These guys had to prepare the bikes for Thailand after Dubai, got the bikes into crates, then shipped them off to Thailand, picked up the crated, emptied them, and had the bikes ready for Friday. Heavy rain, hot conditions the mechanics just got on with the job.

6. Torsten Hallman. I guess this is for me a little personal. One of the greatest riders of all time the four times World Motocross Champion arrived at the circuit with no big introduction, he just wanted to watch some motocross. Visiting Thailand for the opening of an Ohlins suspension factory in Thailand Mr. Motocross (as he was known back in the day) just cruised the circuit watching some really good racing. He wasn't looking for exposure, just being a fan like so many of us.

7. Gautier Paulin and Evgeny Bobryshev. Both made the fans happy with some amazing jumping. While Paulin made the podium for the second week running and looks strong to continue that form, Bobryshev looked strong at times, but really needs to find his confidence again. Both are good for the sport, and both deserve to have success in it.

8. Privateer teams. Like the mechanics these are the stars of the Grand Prix effort. With sponsorship money collected and many times their own personal bank account emptied the privateer teams do their best to make up the bottom end of the grid. No less important than our factory teams and riders, but for sure far less looked at. Like a shadow of the big teams these teams deserve respect for their involvement in our GP series.

9. Thai people. Friendly, helpful, and they made this visit to a Grand Prix really enjoyable. Kraitos Wongsawan the promoter of the event was seen working all weekend and his family and friends also pitched in to help.

10. Jake Nicholls. Hardly a stand-out results wise, but one thing you have to say about Nicholls is he is a true Grand Prix racer. His accident in the Superfinal and that he remounted and continued on was impressive to say the least. They make Motocross riders hard and Nicholls is one of the hardest.

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Gautier Paulin has started the 2013 season on fire. His talent is never a question mark, and if he can continue to be on the podium, or around the top five then his season will be a good one. The Frenchman was amazing in Thailand with his huge jumps and attaching style. Ray Archer image

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TOP TEN THINGS

GRAND PRIX OF QATAR

STORY GEOFF MEYER IMAGE RAY ARCHER

1. The circuit and Lights. Amazing is a word that needs to be used. A really well prepared circuit, with the lighting in its first year there were minor problems, but 2014 we will see permanent lighting and this event will only get better. I talked to maybe 30 riders on the weekend and not one didn't like the circuit and felt the lighting was more than good enough.

2. Clement Desalle. What a brilliant return to the top of the podium. The Rockstar Suzuki rider was smooth, strong and showed great spirit. He has been quicker than Cairoli on more occasions, and I think everyone hopes for the sake of the Championship that he can continue this strong showing.

3. Jeffrey Herlings. Standing tall in the Superfinal it was hard not to be impressed by the Dutchman. A talent that could and has won against any rider in the World. His 36-0 hopes (he wants to win all the MX2 motos in 2013) is on track for now and his positive energy at this race was infectious.

4. The Superfinal. This was a mad a race as I have ever witnessed. The first corner and opening laps was like a wildfire crashing through a forest. It had all the mechanics and team managers on their feed and screaming. It even made the combined MXoN motos seem a little average and that isn't an overstatement. Maybe because of the lights or maybe because we were a long way from home, whatever it was this race was made to bring more people into our sport. If you are talking about intensity, then this race was that.

5. Dean Ferris. The last time an Aussie stood on a Grand Prix podium was Andrew McFarlane in 2005, the same year Sharky finished second in the World to Antonio Cairoli in the MX2 championship. For Dean Ferris to get on the GP podium was a proud moment for the Aussie and one also a time he didn't forget about the other Aussies that had stood on the GP podium before him.

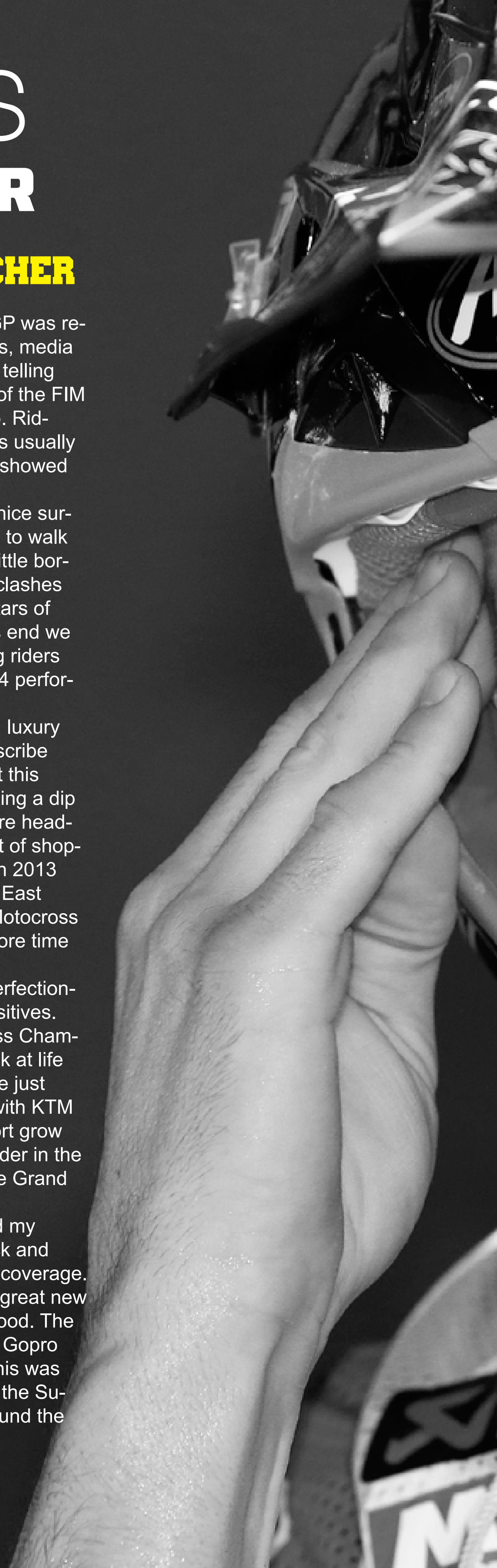
6. Relaxation. The vibe at this GP was really enjoyable. Riders, managers, media all hanging around chatting and telling jokes made this opening round of the FIM World Motocross Championship. Riders could enjoy the weekend this usually nervous opening race, and that showed in the Saturday racing.

7. MX2 class. This class was a nice surprise. Having expected Herlings to walk away and the class might be a little boring was replaced with enjoying clashes between many of the next big stars of the sport. I am sure by season's end we will all be looking at these young riders and looking forward to their 2014 performances.

8. Doha, Qatar. Friendly people, luxury and wealth is three words to describe these people. Not one person at this event was disappointed with taking a dip in the hotel swimming pool before heading out to the track or doing a bit of shopping. I can't wait to come back in 2013 and with word that more Middle East countries looking at the World Motocross Championships we might get more time to enjoy these different cultures.

9. Antonio Cairoli. Always the perfectionist and always looking at the positives. The guy has six World Motocross Championships and knows how to look at life differently than most. The fact he just signed for another three years with KTM and his dream is to help the sport grow is a huge positive. The fastest rider in the World in 2012 and a credit to the Grand Prix series.

10. Television coverage. I spend my weekend watching from the track and also checking out the television coverage. Youthstream have added some great new angles to make the sport look good. The helicopter camera or some new Gopro camera positions on the bikes this was great footage. Add the action of the Superfinal and Motocross fans around the World got their money's worth.



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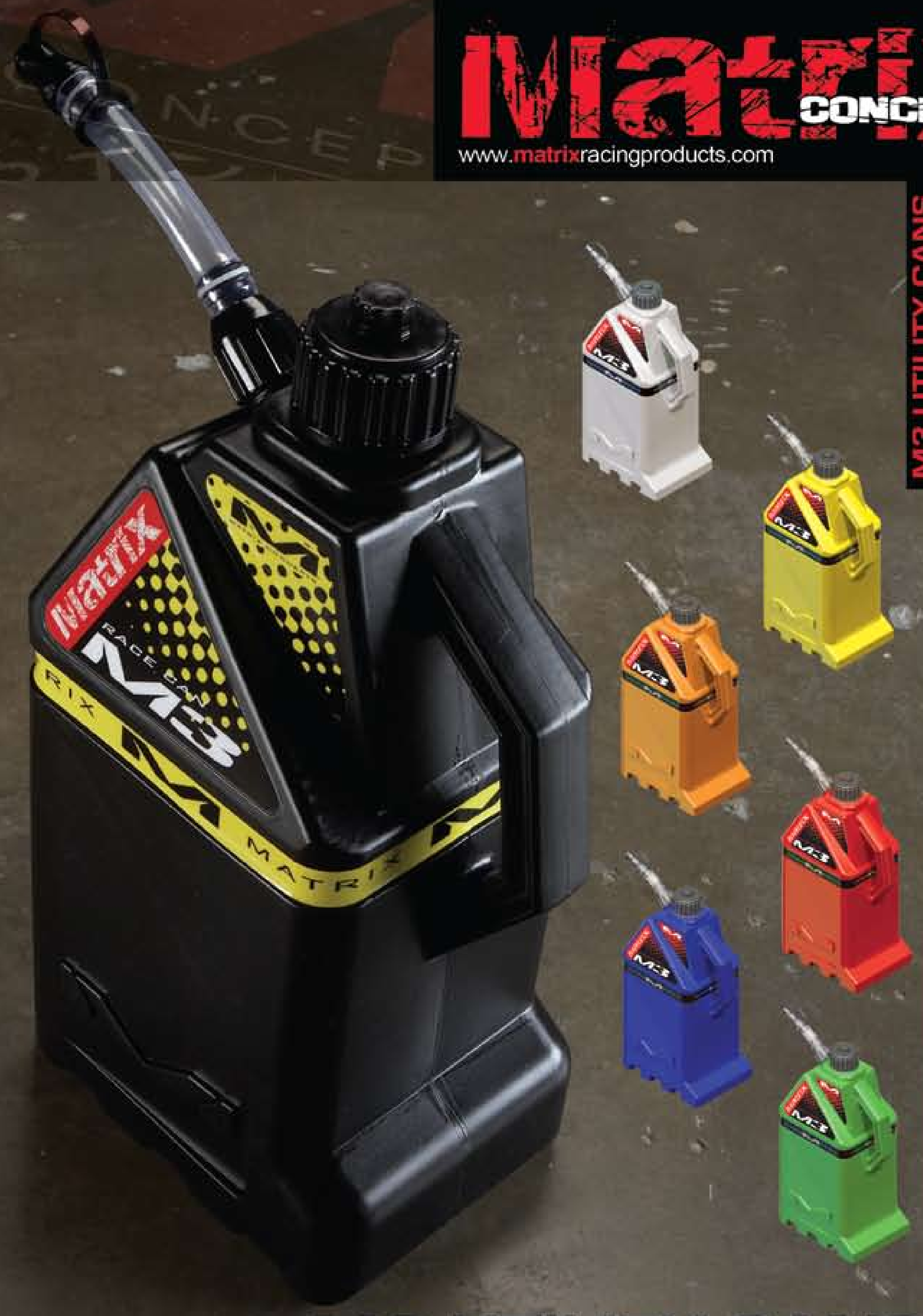

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